(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Government has recently accorded approval to declare the domestic airport at Srinagar as an international airport.

(c) Indian Airlines already offers APEX fares for flights on Delhi-Srinagar-Delhi sector.

(d) Does not arise.

IA'S Bid for London Sector

1389. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM. Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state.

(a) whether IA was not allowed to bid for the operation of Delhi-London and Mumbai-London route, and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) (a) and (b) No, Sir. In fact, Indian Airlines has already been designated for operations to UK. Indian Airlines has only requested for permission to operate 4 flights per week to Birmingham and 3 flights per week to Manchester effective December, 2005.

Leasing of Aircrafts for AI

†1390. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state

(a) whether Government are reconsidering the purchase of 43 aeroplanes for Air India on lease basis;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the total estimated cost of the purchase?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) (a) to (c) In November, 2004, Air India Board approved a fleet acquisition Plan for the period upto 2012/13. This Plan envisages the acquisition of 18 X B 737-800 aircraft for its new airline subsidiary Air India Express and 50 Aircraft for Air India. The estimated project cost for purchase of 68 aircraft will be around Rs. 30,000 crores. A Project Report

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi

for the induction of 18 B 737-800W aircraft for Air India Express has been submitted to the Government for approval. Air India has invited offers for the 50 aircraft to be acquired. These offers have been received. Air India's Techno Economic-cum-Negotiating Committee has evaluated the Technical Bids and submitted its evaluation report to the Management in February 2005.

Strike Called by Crew of Alliance Air

1391. SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the crew of Alliance Air in the northeast resorted to a cat-call strike through mass absenteeism recently causing cancellations of many flights serving the region;

(b) whether the striking crew had put forth demands of party in pay and perks enjoyed by their counterparts flying Airbus aircraft; and

(c) whether Government would consider offering aircrafts now operated by Alliance Air on dry lease to private air carriers to ensure better service to air travellers on non-trunk/remote sectors?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL) (a) There were some cancellations/disruption of ATR-42 flights when the pilots of Alliance Air operating this type of aircraft started reporting sick collectively from the evening of 14th February, 2005. The situation was normalised w.e.f. 19th February, 2005.

(b) No, Sir. The pilots of ATR 42 have put forth a demand for parity in pay scale and perks with B-737 pilots of Alliance Air.

(c) No such proposal is under consideration of the Government.

New Airports in Andhra Pradesh

1392. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have identified any cities in Andhra Pradesh for new airports;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, whether there is any plan to modernise or expand or upgrade the existing airports in Andhra Pradesh?